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Social Theory. By G. D. H. COLE. Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1920. Pp. 220. \$1.50.

This is truly an exceptional book. It goes far toward vindicating the rash hope of a few super-sanguine American scholars that eventually Oxford, yea possibly Harvard, may discover what has been going on since the middle eighteen-seventies in the minds of American sociologists. The publishers inform us that false doctrine need no longer delude, for a prophet with a new truth has arisen at Oxford, and his book has already been adopted as a text at Harvard. We open the volume with reverence and fear. We wish to be devout in the presence of new truth, yet we tremble at the prospect of blinding revelation. What the effect may be upon Oxford or Harvard vision we are unable to state, but after the experiment of facing the demonstration we are in a position to assure normal readers that we have issued from the ordeal without insufferable enlightenment.

The substance of this "new" doctrine turns out to be the inflammatory thesis that "relations of a man to the state do not furnish the whole, or even the greater part of his social existence" (p. 4). Inasmuch as this idea has been remaking social science since Treitschke supposed he had strangled it a-borning before 1860, and inasmuch as multitudes of people who have had their schooling in the United States since 1900 would be hard to convince that anyone ever had a different thought, the author need have no fear that his doctrine will be received as a stranger and an alien upon our shores.

To function as a shock-absorber, to break the force of sudden collision with the "new" truth, the second chapter is devoted to elucidation of seven words, viz.: "community," "society," "customs," "institutions," "associations," "members," and "purposes." In this case again the seed need not waste itself upon sterile soil. Since Professor Sumner began in 1874 to make Yale students acquainted with Spencer's version of facts to which these names have been applied, the number of Americans who annually learn about them, quite likely in more critical terms than these seven, and with more coherent exposition of them, has grown to thousands. Should fulsome advertising call the book to their attention, the reaction of the majority might conceivably be that of *Oliver Twist*—demand for a more satisfying portion.

In elaborating his novel version of Western society the author makes use of a bibliography of some forty titles. Of these, with a single exception, not one might be successfully impeached on the ground of an

American taint in its origin. This is well. Otherwise ingenuous American youth might fall under the illusion that Oxford notices American books. In spite of the fact that since 1883 Americans have been developing a literature which has brought to light much social reality that had previously been hid, and although it has long been a relatively belated American college in which the essentials of human association have not been analyzed with a creditable degree of competence, there is still room for a conspectus of the most commonplace sociological generalizations adapted to the comprehension of the youngest beginners. If teachers welcome the announcement of this book in the hope that it has met this want, they will be disappointed. It certainly does not fill any other gap.

From a first glance one receives the impression that the book has reduced profundities laboriously fathomed by many men to a simplicity of expression which had not previously been achieved. Further attention shows that the discussion is not aimed at a single public. At one step it appears to be addressed to children. A moment later it falls into a manner appropriate only in discussion with philosophers or seasoned politicians. In neither case does it "have the punch." Still closer inspection detects passages which might almost serve as samples of the sort of composition which deliberately exaggerates sententiousness into nonsense. On the whole candor compels the report that the author has brewed a few familiar concepts and some scattered observation into a turgidity against which adequate familiarity with the sociological analyses of the past two decades and a consistently observed purpose might have been a protection.

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National Evolution. By GEORGE R. DAVIES. Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1919. Pp. xii+159. \$0.75.

This little volume is a condensed treatment of social evolution or social progress, with the emphasis upon its economic features. In the first of its four chapters the author discusses the elements—especially economic—of social evolution, such as the establishment of the principle of private property, the centralization and integration of capital, and their culmination in the nations of ancient history.

Under the title "Christian Civilization" he considers Western civilization as the direct evolution from the Roman Empire, the cultural movement being Christianity. He traces the evolution of Christianity